

Soldier Life

Every Fort Point soldier served guard duty for at least one 24-hour period every week. Day or night, eight men were stationed in the guardroom while the rest of the guard detail stood watch at sentry posts around the fort.

Drills, marching and cannon firing were a big part of a soldier's daily life. This was to remind them of the importance of discipline. They had to react quickly to orders. They had to be skilled in their duties.

Soldiers could be assigned to the gunpowder room. They had to take barrels filled with black powder down from a shelf. Then, they had to roll the barrels back and forth to make sure the powder did not form into big clumps that could not be used. A barrel could weigh 100 pounds. They wore special booties in the gunpowder room because their regular shoes were made with nails; the metal from the nails could cause a spark that might explode the gunpowder!

Privates slept 24 to a room. They used bunk beds and had to share their mattress with someone else. Like most civilians, the soldiers slept on mattresses made of straw.

All dirty clothes had to be put away in knapsacks.

The rooms had small fireplaces. They burned coal to keep the room warm. The room usually smelled from coal burning, wet clothes and dirty boots.

Soldiers had to wash their feet twice a week.

Saturday was cleaning day. The beds were cleaned, floors were rubbed, blankets shaken and mattresses supplied with new straw.

Enlisted soldiers had three days off a month.

Their food was rationed. Everyone ate at the same time. Soldiers could earn more money by cooking food for the officers.

Soldiers could buy extra supplies from a civilian called a sutler. The sutler had a store nearby.

Enlisted soldiers received \$13.00 a month.

Headquarters Department of the Pacific - San Francisco

Here are rules that the soldiers knew very well:

Instruction for General Supervision of Fort Point

1. There must be, night and day, at least two sentinels, one on the barbette battery, and one at the gate.
2. When the gates are closed and opened it must be done under the supervision of the officer of the day, in whose charge the keys must always remain.
3. The postern gate must never be opened in the morning until the sentinel on the barbette battery has examined the area near the fort, nor the main gate be opened until the grounds within musket range of the fort have been examined by a patrol.
4. During the absence of the patrol the guard must remain under arms.
5. The lower shutters must be fastened and examined by the officer of the day at Retreat.
6. No smoking will be allowed on the parade ground.
7. The soldiers will not be permitted to go on the barbette battery except on duty.
8. Proper orders will be given to prevent the destruction of the property of the engineers.

Orders for the Officer of the Guard at Fort Point

1. The Guard will be divided into three reliefs of three men each.
2. The gun detachment will be drilled twice each day at the guns from 11 to 12 A.M. and from 2 to 3 P.M.
3. The water will be pumped into the upper reservoir by the gun detachment every day.
4. The part of the post occupied by the Guard must be kept in thorough police. Its condition at the time it is turned over to the new Guard will be reported in Guard report.
5. No Federal troops in the Department of the Pacific will ever surrender to rebels.

Bugle Calls

A soldier's day was regulated by bugle calls. The bugle calls told the soldiers what to do next, just like the bell sounding at school. The following bugle calls were used in the United States during the 1860s:

- 0500 **Assembly of Buglers** - Awaken, dress in uniform, and attend to toilet. This was the first call of the day.
- 0515 **Assembly** - Assemble in parade ground at Parade Rest.
Reveille - Begin roll call, uniform inspection and receive daily orders. This call sounded a minute or two after Assembly. All were to be present except for sick and guards. Then, the sergeant made daily report to company commander, as to sick and AWOL (Absent Without Leave).
To the Colors - Raise the flag.
- 0530 **Mess Call** - Report to mess hall for breakfast.
- 0700 **Sick Call** - Report to fort hospital for treatment.
- 0715 **Fatigue Call** - Police the parade ground, living quarters, privies.
Drill - Prepare for drill assignment. This was the first call. Soldiers were to either get ready to assemble in parade ground for orders or proceed to drill position as given at morning roll call.
Assembly - Assemble in the parade, if needed.
- 1130 **Issue Call** - Receive supplies. This call was only sounded if supplies were delivered.
- 1200 **Dinner Call** - Report to mess hall for dinner. This call sounded different from the Mess Call used at breakfast and supper.
Attention - Gather in parade for afternoon detailing of duty or further drill. This call was used along with Assembly.
- 1645 **Attention** - Report for roll call for findings of court martial, general orders, lectures on condition of company, etc. This call was used with Assembly.
Retreat - End work details of the day.
To the Colors - Lower the flag.
- 1730 **Mess Call** - Report to mess hall for supper.
- 2100 **Tattoo** - Turn off lights and go to sleep.

The taps we know today first came into use during the Civil War, 1861-1865. General Dan Butterfield composed it one afternoon, whistled it to his bugler, who sounded it that night. The next day, the other buglers came and asked what that new call was, and after later clearance by commanders, it was used throughout the Army. Before this, Tattoo was the finale of the day. It was General Butterfield also who started the use of introductory calls to signify to which company a call was directed.

U.S. Army Uniform 1861

Headress

The soldier's hat was known as the "Jeff Davis" hat after Jefferson Davis, who authorized the hat while he was Secretary of War. The brim is turned up on the right side for mounted men and on the left for foot men. Light artillerymen wore the old style "tar bucket" hat instead. One black ostrich feather indicated an enlisted man; three feathers, an officer. The hat cord reflected corps color: cavalry - yellow, artillery - red, infantry - sky blue. The hat insignia was worn in front, with corps insignia and regimental number above it, and the company letter above that. The enlisted soldier's device was all in brass; the officer's corps device was of gold embroidery, and the regimental number and company letter in silver embroidery.

Coat

The frock coat of dark blue cloth was authorized for all but fatigue duty. All the trim was in the color of the corps. Enlisted men's and company officers' coats were single breasted, while field and general officers wore double breasted coats. The chevrons for rank distinction and service for enlisted men were as follows:

Sergeant Major	three bars and an arc, in silk	
Quartermaster Sgt	three bars and a tie, in silk	
Ordnance Sgt	three bars and a star, in silk	
First Sergeant	three bars and a lozenge, in worsted	
Sergeant	three bars, in worsted	
Corporal	two bars, in worsted	

Service stripes, one for each five years of "faithful service," ran diagonally from seam to seam just above the point of the cuff, in corps color.

Trousers

The uniform orders of 1861 authorized trousers of dark blue cloth for all enlisted men except those of the light artillery companies. However, the orders of 1857 were generally followed on this point, as they authorized trousers of sky blue cloth for all enlisted men including light artillerymen. Sergeants wore one stripe 1 1/2 inches wide in corps color down the outer seam of the trousers. Corporals wore a 1/2-inch wide stripe in corps color. Ordnance sergeants wore a 1 1/2-inch stripe in crimson. Privates wore no stripes at all.

Sword

All foot non-commissioned officers (NCO) were authorized to carry the regulation NCO sword. All NCOs of the foot artillery carried the Foot Artillery sword, model 1833. Privates carried the standard musket bayonet and other like accessories used by foot men.

Army Food

Soldiers took turns working in the post kitchen. Here are two "rules" they were expected to follow:

The Cook's Creed

"Cleanliness is next to godliness, both in persons and kettles; be ever industrious, then, in scouring your pots. Much elbow grease, a few ashes, and a little water are capital aids to the careful cook. Dirt and grease betray the poor cook, and destroy the poor soldier; whilst health, content, and good cheer should ever reward him who does his duty and keeps his kettles clean. In military life, punctuality is to be exact in time. Be sparing with sugar and salt, as a deficiency can be better remedied than an over-plus."

(U.S. Army Cookbook, 1863)

Kitchen Philosophy

"Remember that beans, badly boiled, kill more than bullets; and fat is more fatal than powder. In cooking, more than anything else in this world, always make haste slowly. One hour too much is vastly better than five minutes too little, with rare exceptions. A big fire scorches your soup, burns your face, and crisps your temper. Skim, simmer and scour are the true secrets of good cooking." (U.S. Army Cookbook, 1863)

Menus

A typical daily menu for soldiers looked like this:

Breakfast at 0530 Baked meat hash, with onion gravy Coffee Bread	Breakfast at 0530 Codfish hash Coffee Bread
Dinner at 1200 Vegetable Soup Baked beans and bacon Mashed potatoes and bread Boiled mush, with syrup	Dinner at 1200 Pork and Cabbage Potatoes Rice pudding Bread
Supper at 1730 Stewed dried fruit Tea Bread	Supper at 1730 Boiled rice and syrup Coffee Bread

Napoleon 12-Pounder Field Cannon

The model 1857 Napoleon field cannon at Fort Point was manufactured by Cyrus Alger & Co., Boston, Massachusetts during the Civil War. This cannon is called a 12-pounder because its cannon ball weighs 12 pounds.

The cannon was attached to a limber, or wheeled ammunition chest, and drawn by six horses. Though this type of cannon was not typical of a seacoast fort, its loading and firing procedures were very similar to the large cannon of Fort Point.

Cannon are dangerous weapons. During each drill, the cannon would be treated with caution and respect. Eight soldiers worked together to fire the cannon. Carelessness on the part of one soldier could be disastrous for the entire crew.

Cannon Drill Rules

These rules were very familiar to the soldiers:

Never sacrifice safety or proper procedure for speed. During a drill, emphasis is on accuracy of procedure, and following the proper steps in their proper order. Speed comes after constant drilling.

During the drill, never step in front of the muzzle or over the trail of the cannon.

Always use the haversack, with the flap closed, to transport the ammunition from the limber to cannon. Sparks could easily set off exposed powder.

Always use the worm (corkscrew) to remove ammunition from the cannon barrel. Never reach down the barrel with your hand.